

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 281543

NODIS
FOR AMBASSADOR

FOLLOWING REPEAT GENEVA 9119 ACTION SECSTATE DTD 16 NOV

QTE

S E C R E T 9119

NODIS

FOR SCHAUFELE FROM WISNER

DEPT PASS LONDON

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PFOR, RH, UK
SUBJECT: RHODESIA CONFERENCE: DEBATE OVER THE INDEPENDENCE DATE

1. THE PATRIOTIC FRONT FAILED TO APPEAR AT 11:00
AND AS A RESULT THE CHAIRMAN CALLED FOR A 45 MINUTE
DELAY. THE MEETING WHICH BEGAN AT 11:45 LASTED 15
MINUTES.

2. ACCORDING TO THE BRITISH, THE SESSION OPENED WITH
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MUGABE READING THE PATRIOTIC FRONT'S STATEMENT. (GENEVA

9117) THE STATEMENT CHARGED THAT THE BRITISH POSITION ON AN INDEPENDENCE DATE WAS NOT SUFFICIENTLY CLEAR BECAUSE THERE WAS NO INDICATION HOW LONG THE CONFERENCE WOULD LAST AND HOW MUCH TIME WOULD BE NEEDED TO COMPLETE NEGOTIATIONS OVER THE FORMATION OF THE INTERIM GOVERNMENT.

3. MUGABE ALSO ATTACKED BRITISH MOTIVES AND THE WAY RICHARD WAS CONDUCTING THE NEGOTIATIONS. HE CHARGED THAT KEY DOCUMENTS HAD BEEN WITHHELD FROM HIS GROUP.

4. BURIED IN THE PATRIOTIC FRONT'S STATEMENT IS AN AMBIGUOUS REFERENCE TO THE NEXT STAGE OF THE CONFERENCE. "OUR REJECTION FLOWS FROM THE NATURE OF THE BRITISH DOCUMENT ITSELF WHICH DOES NOT ALLOW US TO PROCEED INTO THE NEXT STAGE OF THE PRESENT DELIBERATIONS, BECAUSE IT IS IMPRECISE, UNCERTAIN, AND NOT PEGGED TO A FIRM DATE OF INDEPENDENCE." WHEN HE READ THE PATRIOTIC FRONT'S STATEMENT, MUGABE REITERATED THIS POINT BUT DID NOT SAY WHAT HE MEANT.

5. RICHARD REPLIED TO THE PATRIOTIC FRONT AND SAID THAT THE BRITISH DELEGATION HAD TREATED EVERY DELEGATION ON AN EQUAL FOOTING. HE REPEATED WHAT HE HAD TOLD THE PATRIOTIC FRONT IN PRIVATE THAT NO DELEGATION HAD SEEN A COPY OF HIS STATEMENT BEFORE THE NOVEMBER 15 PLENARY SESSION. EACH DELEGATION HAD BEEN FULLY BRIEFED ON WHAT HE INTENDED TO SAY. WITH RESPECT TO THE CHAIRMAN'S NOTE ON THE INTERIM GOVERNMENT, HE HAD DISTRIBUTED THAT NOTE ONLY TO THOSE DELEGATIONS WHICH HAD EXPRESSED AN INTEREST IN PROCEEDING TO DISCUSSIONS OF THE INTERIM GOVERNMENT. SINCE THE PATRIOTIC FRONT HAD NOT EXPRESSED AN INTEREST, THEY WERE NOT GIVEN A COPY OF THE CHAIRMAN'S NOTE. (I HAD NOT UNDERSTOOD IN MY MEETING WITH RICHARD ON NOVEMBER 15 THAT THE PATRIOTIC FRONT HAD NOT RECEIVED A COPY OF THE CHAIRMAN'S NOTE. ROB BYATT TELLS ME THE BRITISH DECIDED NOT TO GIVE THE PATRIOTIC FRONT THE NOTE SINCE THEY FEARED IT WOULD BE INTERPRETED BY NKOMO AND MUGABE AS AN ATTEMPT TO CIRCUMVENT THEM

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BEFORE THEY HAD MADE THEIR MINDS UP ON THE QUESTION OF THE DATE OF INDEPENDENCE.)

6. THE BRITISH DO NOT KNOW WHAT NKOMO AND MUGABE WILL DO NEXT. THEY ARE NOT INCLINED TO PRESS THE PATRIOTIC FRONT FOR A FURTHER CLARIFICATION OF ITS POSITION, LEST THE FRONT DIG IN IN A MORE INTRANSIGENT FASHION. THE BRITISH EXPECT THAT THE

OBSERVERS WILL BE IN TOUCH SHORTLY AND PROVIDE THEM WITH AN INDICATION OF HOW THE FRONT INTENDS TO PROCEED.

7. IN THIS REGARD, THE BRITISH ARE INCREASINGLY CONCERNED BY THE ROLE WHICH THE MOZAMBIQUE DELEGATION HAS PLAYED. THE MOZAMBICANS HAVE APPARENTLY URGED THE PATRIOTIC FRONT TO STAND FIRM ON THE INDEPENDENCE DATE. THE BRITISH HAVE RECEIVED A REPORT THAT CHISSANO WILL ARRIVE IN GENEVA TODAY AND HOPE THAT HE WILL BE BRINGING NEW INSTRUCTIONS.

8. DESPITE NKOMO AND MUGABE'S AMBIGUOUS POSITION ON PROCEEDING WITH INTERIM GOVERNMENT NEGOTIATIONS, THE BRITISH WILL PROCEED WITH CONSULTATIONS ON THIS SUBJECT. RICHARD WILL MEET SITHOLE THIS AFTERNOON AND MUZOREWA TOMORROW AFTERNOON.

9. NEITHER MUZOREWA NOR SITHOLE HAD ANYTHING TO SAY WHEN THEY LEFT THE PLENARY SESSION. VAN DER BYL'S REMARKS WERE LIMITED. HE SAID THE FRONT HAD REJECTED "EVERYTHING" AND HAD RAISED "UNFOUNDED" CHARGES AGAINST THE CHAIRMAN. HE SAID THAT HE DID NOT KNOW "WHERE WE STAND."

10. IN MEETING THE PRESS, NKOMO AND MUGABE REITERATED THEIR POSITION ON A 12 MONTH PERIOD OF TRANSITION AND CHARGED RICHARD'S "IMPRECISION, EVASION AND UNCERTAINTY" HAS LED TO THE PRESENT IMPASSE. THEY SAID THAT BRITISH "INTRANSIGENCE" HAVE RAISED THEIR SUSPICIONS BUT THAT THE NEXT MOVE WAS UP TO THE BRITISH. WHEN ASKED IF THEY WERE WALKING OUT OF THE CONFERENCE, NKOMO AND MUGABE SAID THEY WERE NOT, BUT IT WAS UP TO THE BRITISH TO DECIDE WHETHER AND HOW WE

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CONTINUE.

11. RICHARD'S REMARKS TO THE PRESS RESTATED HIS POSITION THAT THE BRITISH HAVE GONE AS FAR AS THEY REASONABLY CAN WITH THE DATE OF INDEPENDENCE. HE SAID THERE HAVE BEEN NO DISCRIMINATION AGAINST THE PATRIOTIC FRONT; IN FACT MORE TIME HAD BEEN SPENT IN CONSULTATIONS WITH THE FRONT THAN WITH ANY OTHER DELEGATION. HE TOLD THE PRESS HE PLANS TO CONTINUE BILATERAL DISCUSSIONS BUT DID NOT FORESEE THE CONFERENCE BREAKING DOWN. "NO ONE IS TALKING OF QUITTING."

12. RICHARD WAS ASKED TO COMMENT ON MUGABE'S AND NKOMO'S STATEMENT THAT A CLOSING DATE

FOR THE CONFERENCE SHOULD BE SELECTED. IN REPLY,
RICHARD NOTED THAT THE DATE OF NOVEMBER 30, WHICH
CONFERENCE PARTICIPANTS HAVE BEEN USING, CAME FROM
THE NATIONALISTS. HE ADDED THAT IT MIGHT BE POSSIBLE
"TO DEVISE A TIMETABLE" TO SEE HOW MUCH TIME WE SHOULD
SPEND ON EACH OF THE TOPICS DURING THE CONFERENCE.

13. COMMENT: RICHARD'S SUGGESTION OF A TIMETABLE
MAY OPEN A NEW PANDORA'S BOX. AS SOON AS I CAN
REACH HIM, I WILL TRY TO FIND OUT WHAT HE HAS IN
MIND. ABRAMS UNQTE ROBINSON

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